1872. Blandford (1891) also mentions its occurrence on the West coast. Joseph in Leatherwood (in press) reports of two entangled specimens, one at Kirinda in 1982 and the other at Kottegoda on 14 July 1983. The present record from Negombo is therefore the fourth so far reported.

It is of interest that the majority of *Peponocephala electra* have been taken in the month of October (1985, 1987 and 1988) even though these dolphins have been landed at different fishery harbours (Negombo, Beruwala, Mirissa and Kottegoda). We are unable to offer any explanation at present for this situation.

Alling (1985) attributes the mortality of dolphins in Sri Lanka mostly to entrapment in gillnets used by fishermen. However, out of a total of 26 animals discussed in the present paper 10 had been harpooned. That harpooning is a threat as serious as net entanglement is also suggested by the data we have obtained in respect of other dolphin species in the landed catch at these fishery harbours.

Mohan (1985) states that the peak season of the occurrence of dolphins in the nets in Calicut, India, is from October to February although there were individual variations between the species. The infrequent species discussed in this paper were landed in the months of January, February, April, May, July, September and October. However, the majority of the records are during the period from October to February. We hope to analyse the data obtained on the landed catch of other dolphin species in this study in due course and the results will shed more light on the exact situation in Sri Lanka.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our sincere thanks to Dr. Hiran W. Jayewardane, the Chairman of NARA, for providing facilities for this research. We also wish to thank Dr. P.H.D.H. de Silva, Consultant to the Marine Mammal Programme for his help in the preparation of this manuscript.

ANOUK ILANGAKOON
W.P. MAHENDRA
August 31, 1990 H.A.K. SUBASINGHE

REFERENCES

ALLING, A. (1985) Small Cetacean Entanglement: a case study of the incidental entrapment of Cetaceans in Sri Lanka's gillnet fishery. Rept. Int. Whal. Comm. Document SC/37/SMS.

ALLING, A., GORDON, J., ROTTON, N., & WHITEHEAD, H., (1982): WWF – Netherlands, Indian Ocean Sperm Whale Study 1981-1982. Interim report, March 1982.

BLANFORD, W.T. (1891): The Fauna of British India including Ceylon and Burma. Taylor and Francis, London, pp. 564–591.

DE SILVA, P.H.D.H. (1987): Cetaceans (Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises) off Sri Lanka, India, from the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden and from the Red Sea. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 84(3)*: 505–525.

HOLDSWORTH, E.W.H. (1872): Note on a Cetacean observed on the West coast of Ceylon. *Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.* pp. 583-586.

JOSEPH, L., SIDEEK, M.S.M., & JAYAKODY, D.S. (1983): Cetaceans landed by fishermen in Negombo, Sri Lanka. NARA Int. Symp.

MOHAN, R. S. LAL (1985): Observations on the By-catch of Dolphins *Stenella longirostris, Tursiops aduncus, Sousa chinensis* and *Delphinus delphis tropicalis* in the gillnets off Calicut Coast, India. Proc. Symp. endangred Marine Mammals and Marine Parks. I, pp. 77-83.

PREMATUNGA, W.P.,, ALLING, A. & LEATHERWOOD, S. (1985): Species Composition of Small Cetacean By-catches in Gillnets off Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, January 1984 through April 1985. Rept. Int. Whal. Comm., Document No. SC/37/SM9.

SANTARRE, M.T. & SANTARRE, R.M. (1983): Historical Records of the Occurrence and Distribution of Marine Mammals in Sri Lanka, NARA/SMM 10.

4. THE FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* PALLAS IN KERALA

Purathur, 55 km south of Kozhikode on the west coast of Kerala, is the point where the river Bharathapuzha enters the sea. The estuary is characterised by shallow waters and extensive sandy islets which get exposed during low tide. The river is approximately a kilometre wide towards its mouth. The birds seen at the estuary include some species rarely seen in Kerala.

During the winter months from October to March, large numbers of shorebirds and seabirds visit the estuary and many congregate on the sandflats. Purathur is one of the largest congregating sites for

gulls in Kerala.

On 11 March 1991, a flock of five flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* was found feeding in the shallow waters of the estuary. All the birds appeared to be immatures. They were all greyish with a little pink daubed on the back. The head and neck were greyish brown. In flight, the primaries and the trailing edges of the wings were black. The bill was sharply downcurved and black-tipped. The rest of the mandibles were horn coloured; and the legs, pinkish. The birds were standing in knee-deep water engaged in their characteristic feeding movements for sifting brine. They did not appear to be too wary of our approaching canoe but only walked away. Local enquiries indicated that the five birds had been there from about the middle of January.

D. K. NARAYANA KURUP
December 24, 1991 C. MOHAN KUMAR

5. A VISIT TO THE 'FLAMINGO CITY' IN THE GREAT RANN OF KUTCH, GUJARAT

In his excellent notes on the breeding of the flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* and *Phoeniconaias minor*, Dr. Salim Ali has fully described the conditions in the Great Rann, the rivers flowing into it etc. Without repeating the details, it may be mentioned here that conditions recently were similar to those described by him (*JBNHS 71 (1)*: 141-144, 1974). Since Salim Ali first described his visit in the year 1945 (*JBNHS 45*: 586-593) conditions in the Rann, particularly the water regime, have undergone a change. This is mainly owing to the damming of the rivers and rivulets flowing into the area. The inflow of water from river Luni (Rajasthan) and also from the Banas (N. Gujarat) is far less since dams have been built on them. In the beginning of the 1990 monsoon season extremely heavy rain fell in north Gujarat and in Barmer district of Rajasthan due to which the dams on those rivers overflowed, and continued to do so for a long time. Rain arrived late in Kutch (end August), but Pachham got very heavy rainfall, as a result of which plenty of water went into the Great Rann. Thus conditions for nest-building did not become suitable till about November 1990.

During my birdwatching trips in Kutch during the 1989-90 winter I noticed a near complete absence of the greater flamingo in their usual haunts, along the sea coast, in tidal creeks and on inland collections of water. This was also observed by other birdwatchers in this district. So it was suspected that these birds may have congregated in the Rann.

Thus to investigate whether the flamingo had actually collected in the Great Rann of Kutch it was necessary to pay a visit there. I was fortunate in succeeding to persuade the Forest Department of the district to undertake a survey. So along with A.C. Patel, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Bhuj, two Forest Guards and a Ranger, I set out for the well known 'Flamingo City' on 7 January 1991. Camels were locally hired at Tugga village to take us to Nir, a former outpost of the erstwhile Kutch State Police, now manned by the B.S.F., and the entry-point for the Rann in the north of Pachham Island. After about a 14 km journey we made a night halt at Nir. The winter morning of 8 January was very clear with good visibility. We could see flamingo at a distance as a thin white line from Nir itself.

The final stretch of about 8 km from Nir through the slush and water, from 60 cm to about 1.3 m deep, in the Rann took us nearly five hours with the camels wading through water and slithering in the slippery mud. We reached the 'Flamingo City' around 1430 hrs. We took a rough count of the birds with the help of binoculars. Our estimate was that there were 25,000 to 30,000 adults, between 10,000 and 15,000 young, ranging in age from newly hatched to a fortnight old and several nests containing one egg each. Our first impression was that there could not have been less than 12,000 nests, some of them perhaps unoccupied, while there may have been others left over from a previous year's breeding attempt. Actually the colony is in two sections with some clusters of nests having empty spaces in between, making the estimation of their numbers rather tricky; and this would also apply to the calculation of the number of the flamingo. Besides this, the haze caused by the afternoon sun adds to the difficulty. We had already spent about 2 $^1/_2$ hours there; not wanting to unduly disturb the breeding birds and we began our return journey to Nir. As we left, we could look back to see the adult flamingo starting to come back to their eggs and young.

Not having been satisfied with the rough